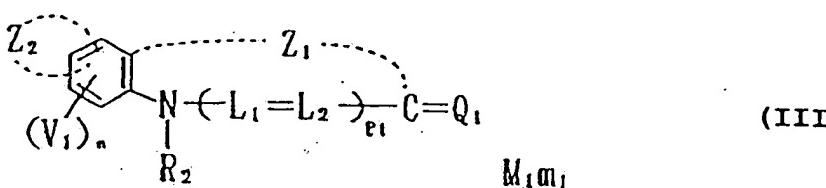


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (currently amended): A compound represented by formula (III):

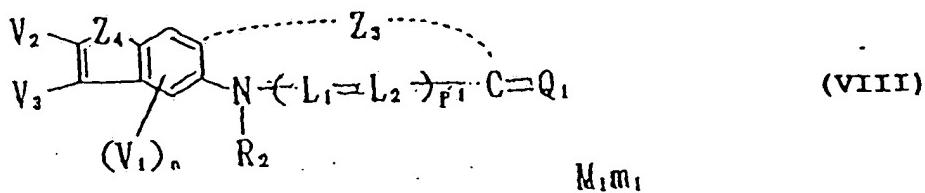


wherein Z_1 represents an atomic group necessary to form thiazole; Z_2 represents an atomic group selected from the group consisting of a furan ring and a thiophene ring which has ~~are~~ condensed to a benzo ring to form a tetracyclic ring-system; R_2 represents a substituted or unsubstituted alkyl group or a substituted or unsubstituted aryl group; L_1 and L_2 each represents a methine group; p_1 represents 0; V_1 represents a substituent selected from a halogen atom, a mercapto group, a cyano group, a carboxyl group, a phosphoric acid group, a sulfo group, a hydroxyl group, a carbamoyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms, a sulfamoyl group having from 0 to 10 carbon atoms, a nitro group, an alkoxy group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, an aryloxy group having from 6 to 20 carbon atoms, an acyl group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, an acyloxy group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, an acylamino group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a sulfonyl group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a sulfinyl group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a sulfonylamino group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, an amino

group, a substituted amino group selected from methylamino, dimethylamino, benzylamino, anilino, and diphenylamino, an ammonium group having from 0 to 15 carbon atoms, a hydrazino group having from 0 to 15 carbon atoms, a ureido group having from 1 to 15 carbon atoms, an imido group having from 1 to 15 carbon atoms, an alkylthio group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, an arylthio group having from 6 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkoxy carbonyl group having from 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an aryloxycarbonyl group having from 6 to 20 carbon atoms, an unsubstituted alkyl group having from 1 to 18 carbon atoms, a substituted-alkyl group selected from hydroxymethyl, trifluoromethyl, benzyl, carboxyethyl, ethoxycarbonylmethyl, and acetylaminomethyl, an unsaturated hydrocarbon group having from 2 to 18 carbon atoms, an unsubstituted aryl group having from 6 to 20 carbon atoms, a substituted aryl group selected from p-carboxyphenyl, p-nitrophenyl, 3,5-dichlorophenyl, p-cyanophenyl, m-fluorophenyl and p-tolyl, an unsubstituted heterocyclic group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, and a methylpyridyl group; Q_1 represents a methine group or a polymethine group necessary to form a methine dye; M_1 represents an electric charge balancing counter ion; and m_1 represents a number of from 0 to 10 necessary to neutralize the electric charge of the molecule; and n represents 0, 1 or 2, and when n represents 2, a plurality of V_1 may be the same or different.

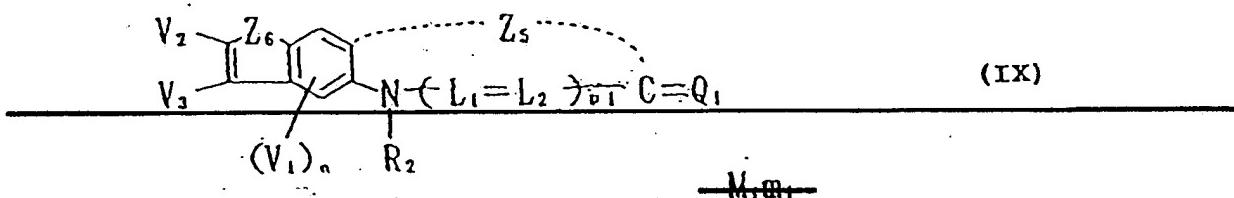
Claim 2. (previously presented): The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the selected atomic group for Z_2 is a furan ring.

Claim 3. (currently amended): The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the compound represented by formula (III) is represented by formula (VIII)-or-(IX):



wherein Z_4 represents an oxygen atom or a sulfur atom; Z_3 represents an atomic group necessary to form thiazole, L_1 , L_2 , p_1 , V_1 , n , R_2 , Q_1 , M_1 , and m_1 each has the same meaning as described in formula (III); and V_2 and V_3 each represents a substituent selected from a halogen atom, a mercapto group, a cyano group, a carboxyl group, a phosphoric acid group, a sulfo group, a hydroxyl group, a carbamoyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms, a sulfamoyl group having from 0 to 10 carbon atoms, a nitro group, an alkoxy group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, an aryloxy group having from 6 to 20 carbon atoms, an acyl group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, an acyloxy group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, an acylamino group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a sulfonyl group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a sulfinyl group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, a sulfonylamino group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, an amino group, a substituted amino group selected from methylamino, dimethylamino, benzylamino, anilino, and diphenylamino, an ammonium group having from 0 to 15 carbon atoms, a hydrazino group having from 0 to 15 carbon atoms, a ureido group having from 1 to 15 carbon atoms, an imido group having from 1 to 15 carbon atoms, an alkylthio group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, an arylthio group having from 6 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkoxycarbonyl group having from 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an aryloxycarbonyl group having from 6 to 20 carbon atoms, an unsubstituted alkyl group having from 1 to 18 carbon atoms, a substituted-alkyl group

selected from hydroxymethyl, trifluoromethyl, benzyl, carboxyethyl, ethoxycarbonylmethyl, and acetylaminomethyl, an unsaturated hydrocarbon group having from 2 to 18 carbon atoms, an unsubstituted aryl group having from 6 to 20 carbon atoms, a substituted aryl group selected from p-carboxyphenyl, p-nitrophenyl, 3,5-dichlorophenyl, p-cyanophenyl, m-fluorophenyl and p-tolyl, an unsubstituted heterocyclic group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, and a methylpyridyl group, and V₂ and V₃ form a condensed ring containing V₂ and V₃[[:]]



wherein Z₆ represents N-R₃; Z₅ represents an atomic group necessary to form thiazole; R₃ represents a hydrogen atom or a substituent; L₁, L₂, p₁, V₁, n, R₂, Q₁, M₁, and m₁ each has the same meaning as described in formula (III); and V₂ and V₃ each has the same meaning as described in formula (VIII).

Claim 4. (original): The compound as claimed in claim 3, wherein R₂ represents an alkyl group having an aryl group as a substituent or an aryl group.

Claim 5. (previously presented): The compound as claimed in claim 3, wherein at least one substituent represented by V₁ is a group having at least one sulfo group, carboxyl group, phosphonic acid group or hydroxyl group.

Claim 6. (previously presented): The compound as claimed in claim 3, wherein at least one substituent represented by V₂ or V₃ in formula (VIII) is a group having at least one sulfo group, carboxyl group, phosphonic acid group or hydroxyl group.

Claim 7. (original): The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein R₂ represents an alkyl group having an aryl group as a substituent or an aryl group.

Claim 8. (previously presented): The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one substituent represented by V₁ is a group having at least one sulfo group, carboxyl group, phosphonic acid group or hydroxyl group.